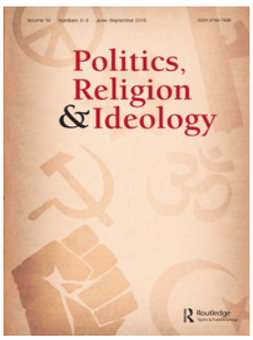

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'The Spiritual and Moral Foundation of Civilization in Every Nation for Thousands of Years': The Traditional Values Discourse in Russia

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ABSTRACT *The concept of 'traditional values' occupies the place of honor in public discourse in Russia today being one of the components of the new ideological narrative. The article is focused on the strategy of the promotion of traditional values by its secular and religious protagonists. It includes three thematic sections: (1) the analysis of the interpretation of the historical past and its place in the concept of traditional values; (2) the investigation of the role of 'the West' as 'enemy' in constructing national identity and defending traditional values; and (3) the examination of the opposition of universality and particularism with regard to traditional values. The author concludes that the concept of traditional values as a response to social and political challenges is promoted by secular powers and religious authorities for the ideological consolidation of Russian society, as well as for the recruiting potential allies on the international arena. At the same time, the noticeable presence of traditional values in public discourse indicates the thirst for reliable meanings in the process of the search for national identity.*

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Introduction: Traditional Values: Proponents, Apologists and Opponents

Since the first half of the 2000s, it is possible to discern a gradual transformation of the ideological atmosphere in Russia, which could be defined as 'the morality turn'.[1] The leading hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) as one of so-called 'traditional religions[2]

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[1]'This morality turn gives more authority to the branding of a "voice of Russia" that until now had remained largely devoid of content. It enables the regime to kill many birds with one stone. Domestically, the morality turn delegitimizes the liberal opposition. Internationally, it helps the Kremlin develop intimate connections with a large range of conservative groups in Western Europe, ranging from the Vatican and some US evangelical movements to family-oriented groups … , and find increased support among European far-right and classic-right political parties. It also creates a channel of dialogue with states of the Middle East and Asia, which often refuse the imposition of the "Western" model in the name of cultural specificity' (Marlene Laruelle, 'Beyond Anti-Westernism: The Kremlin's Narrative about Russia's European Identity and Mission', PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo, No. 326, June 2014, p. 1, http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/Pepm326_Laruelle_August2014.pdf).

[2]'Traditional religion' is a term attributed to the religions mentioned in the preamble to the Russian Federation 1997 'Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations'. In the preamble, the special role of Orthodoxy in the history of Russia, and in the establishment and development of its spirituality and culture, is recognized; the respect toward Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism as religions constituting an integral part of the historical heritage of the peoples of Russia is expressed.

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– Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill, Archbishop Hilarion (Alfeev), Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin – has been deeply involved in the debates on the role and place of traditional values in national identity of Russia's past and present, as well as in the discussion concerning the ROC's attitude toward other nations, their religions, cultures, and morals.[3] The influence of the abovementioned Orthodox leaders' interpretation of traditional values over wider public should not be underestimated since a considerable number of Russians see religion (Orthodoxy in particular) as a cultural symbol of the country and ready-made tool for teaching morality.[4] At the same time, the ROC tends to attribute herself an exclusive role in the sphere of culture and morality. The idea of an indissoluble link between [traditional] religion and morality is strongly supported by the Russian political powers, which tend to delegate the responsibility for moral improvement of Russian people to religious institutions. As a result, in recent decades, the religiosity and moral traditionalism' alliance has substantially increased. As the Russian sociologist Alexander Agadjanian indicates, religion in today's Russia 'is unquestionably a major factor not only for those who regularly practice and observe religion, but it is also an important and esteemed reference point for a massive part of the non-religious population'.[5]

The most influential protagonist of the idea of traditional values from the secular side – the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin – seems to shift from the initial refrain from the official state ideology toward the promotion of the new national ideological consensus based on the moralistic approach, which includes traditional values as its core element. In the annual Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly in December 2013, Putin promised to defend traditional values

> [t]hat have made up the spiritual and moral foundation of civilization in every nation for thousands of years: the values of traditional families, real human life, including religious life, not just material existence but also spirituality, the values of humanism and global diversity.[6]

It seems that in Putin's interpretation, traditional values have transcendent character; they are understood in an essentialist way as eternal and unchangeable, thus being applicable not only to Russia but to other countries as well. In addition, the reference to 'every nation for thousands of years' indicates that Putin's message is addressed not just to the Russian citizens, but also to 'more and more people in the world who support our position'.[7]

Both secular and religious protagonists of traditional values use to place them within broader context – namely, the distinctiveness of the Russian culture and religion comparing

[3]Some of the Moslem leaders in Russia use the rhetoric of traditional values as well. For example, recently the Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of the Moslems of the Russian Federation mufti sheikh Ravil' Gainutdin in his presentation for the X International Moslem Forum (10 December 2014) referred to the concept of the Eurasian culture, which presupposes the defense of traditional values in the multi-polar world (Igor' Gashkov, 'Sheikhi rossiiskogo konservatizma' [The Sheikhs of Russian Conservatism], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 December 2014, http://www.ng.ru/ng_religii/2014-12-17/1_gainutdin.html).

[4]"How trustworthy is the church?' – 'Quite trustworthy' (50% of respondents, 2012); 'Which role should the Church and religious organizations play in Russian public life?' – 'Support public morals and virtues' (44% of respondents, 2013) in Levada Analytical Center, *Russian Public Opinion – 2012–2013* (Moscow: Levada-Center, 2013, pp. 140–143), http://www.levada.ru/sites/default/files/2012_eng.pdf.

[5]Alexander Agadjanian, 'Exploring Russian Religiosity as a Source of Morality Today' in Jarett Zigon (ed) *Multiple Moralities and Religions in Post-Soviet Russia* (New York – Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), pp. 16–26, here p. 17.

[6]"Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly', President of Russia, 12 December 2013, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6402.

[7]Ibid.

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with European countries and the USA, which are generalized as 'the West'. The picturing of Russia as the world's last bastion of the defense of traditional values is an integral part of the idea of the ongoing conflict between two opposite civilizations: Western (secular) and Orthodox (genuine Christian), where the former stands for liberalism, secularism, and individualism, while the latter represents traditionalism, moralism, religion and community.[8] Among other things, the idea of Russia as a separate civilization presupposes that tradition is the way to preserve the nation's culture, which must be protected from foreign influences. The ROC as protagonist of traditional values views Russia as a great nation with an exclusive divine appointment to defend Christian civilization as such. As Alicja Curanovic indicates:

> Tradition is often associated with religion. In the case of Russia, national tradition is increasingly often identified with Orthodox tradition. Traditional Russian values – which traditionalists present as a main moral reference point for society – are thus virtually equated with Orthodox values.[9]

What do the ROC authorities mean by traditional values, and what are their origins? Patriarch Kirill lists the universal values of 'faith, love, duty, responsibility, solidarity'.[10] From his perspective, these eternal values are not the product of the historical evolution, and they do not depend on particular socio-cultural conditions; they are not created by people, but are embedded into the human nature by God. These values are not particularly Christian, because they are built into the structure of the universe and traced back to the first steps of the humankind. Kirill insists: 'We [Russians] share these values with many morally healthy people who do not consider themselves as adherents of any religion and live according to the law of conscience'.[11] Accordingly, the rejection of traditional values leads to the destruction of human beings and society. It is important to note that for both Putin and Kirill, the scale of traditional values is much wider than the opposition to same-sex marriages, the LGBT agenda, and the defense of traditional family, as it is often commented.[12] On the contrary, traditional values are interpreted as the ultimate moral foundation of human life.

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[8]As the Austrian scholar Kristina Stoeckl indicates, 'these pairs of conceptual opposites remain intact throughout the debate; what changes is the self-positioning of the ROC in their respect. Statements by Metropolitan Kirill around the year 2000 suggest that initially he regarded these conceptual opposites as the fundamentals in a clash of cultures between East and West. In this clash the West stood for liberalism, secularism and individual human rights, while the East, that is Orthodox Christianity, was the place of traditionalism, religion and the rights of the community, nation and family. However, in the course of the human rights debate from 2000 onwards, we see how the monolithic image of a liberal, secular and individualistic West is replaced by a more realistic assessment that takes into account the tensions within the western modern experience … In this way the scenario of a "clash of civilizations" is changing from an alleged fight between two cultural and civilizational units (between the "LatinWest" and the "Orthodox East") to a confrontation between a secular–liberal–individualistic ideology and a religious–communitarian and traditionalist world view, regardless of whether these ideological positions are concretised in the West or in the East' (Kristina Stoeckl, 'The Human Rights Debate in the External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church', *Religion, State & Society*, 40:2 [2012], pp. 212–232, p. 216).

[9]Alicja Curanović, 'Weaknesses of the Post-Soviet Religious Model: The Kremlin and "Traditional" Religions in Face of Interethnic Tensions in Russia', *Politics and Religion* 7:4 (2014), pp. 788–817, here p. 796.

[10]'Vystuplenie Sviateishego Patriarkha Kirilla na Rozhdestvenskikh parlamentskikh vstrechakh v Sovete Federatsii RF' [His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow statement for the Christmas parliamentary meeting in the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation]. The Russian Orthodox Church: official site of the Moscow Patriarchate, 28 January, 2014, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3544704.html.

[11]Ibid.

[12]'The fuss over Russia's anti-gay crusade ought to be about far more than the Kremlin's scapegoating a vulnerable minority … And it is this – the prospect of liberalization and the promise of openness – that frightens Putin most, not the increasing tolerance of homosexuality as a "non-traditional relationship" per se, even though that is sure to follow'. James Kirchick, 'Why Putin's Defense of "Traditional Values" Is Really a War on Freedom', *Foreign Policy*,

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Policymakers, state officials, religious leaders, political scientists, sociologists, publicists, and so on – all those individuals who are involved in the debates on traditional values in Russia – are divided into two teams: apologists of the specific role of Russia in defending traditional values (the larger group representing both secular and religious public, which concentrate their efforts on the exegesis of the ideas of top figures – Vladimir Putin on the secular side, and Patriarch Kirill on the religious side) and opponents (the smaller group, which mostly consists of secular academicians). In the debates, mutually exclusive arguments are used in order either to prove or to doubt the very concept of traditional values. Typical apologetic arguments are expounded in the draft under the title *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kulturnoi politiki* ['Basics of the State Cultural Policy'], which was produced by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation in order to explain the official governmental approach toward the national culture, and then presented for public discussion. The document asserts that the understanding of moral values, which are traditional for Russia, is based on the norms and requirements, which are elaborated by humankind and are shared by all world religions. The list of traditional values, according to the Ministry of Culture, includes honesty, truthfulness, orderliness, love of the Motherland [*Rodina*], unselfishness, rejection of violence, stealing, defamation and envy, family values, chastity, kindheartedness and mercy, fidelity to one's word, respect for elders and respect for honest labor.[13] The most recent list of traditional values of Russia is elaborated by the Russian Government in the document, which describes the state educational strategy. The list includes 'humanity, justice, honor, conscience, will, dignity, belief in good, and the desire to fulfill the moral duty before oneself, one's family and one's Fatherland [*Otechestvo*]'.[14]

On the ROC side, the longest and the most substantial inventory of traditional values is presented in the document named *Bazisnye tsennosti – osnova obshchenatsional'noy identichnosti* ['The Basic Values – the Fundaments of the National Identity'], which was elaborated by the Synodal Department of Church Society Cooperation of the Moscow Patriarchate. The document determines as traditionally Russian the following values: faith, justice, peace, freedom, unity, morality, dignity, honesty, patriotism, solidarity, mercy, family, culture and national tradition, prosperity, diligence, self-limitation and devotion.[15]

Paradoxically, both documents are oddly reminiscent of the *Moral Code of the Builder of Communism*, which was adopted in 1963 by the 22 Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The purpose of the *Moral Code* was the moral improvement of the Soviet people in contrast to decaying 'West'. The *Code* included the values of the devotion to the cause of communism; love of the socialist Motherland; conscientious labor; high sense of public duty; collectivism and comradely mutual assistance; humane relations

3 January 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/03/why-putins-defense-of-traditional-values-is-really-a-war-on-freedom/.

[13]'Obsuzhdenie proekta osnov gosudarstvennoi kulturnoi politiki' [The discussion on the draft of the foundations of the state policy in culture]. Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation: official site, May 2014, http://mkrf.ru/open-ministry/public-discussions/proekt-osnov-gosudarstvennoj-kulturnoj-politiki. In the final version of the document, which was accepted in December 2014, the list of traditional values was omitted, as well as the reference to the world religions (see http://news.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d526a877638a8730eb.pdf).

[14]'Rasporiazenie Pravitelstva RF ot 29.05.2015 N 996 "Ob utverzdenii Strategii razvitia vospitania v Rossiiskoi Federatsii na period do 2025 goda" [The Instructions of the Russian Government on 29.05.2015 N 996 'On the approval of the Strategy of the development of education until 2025], Rossiiskaya gazeta, 8 June 2015, http://www.rg.ru/2015/06/08/vospitanie-dok.html.

[15]'Bazisnye tsennosti – osnova obshchenatsional'noy identichnosti' [The basic values – the fundaments for the national identity]. The Russian Orthodox Church: official site of the Moscow Patriarchate, 26 May 2011, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1496038.html. The document was accepted by the XV World Russian national *Sobor* [Congress].

and mutual respect; honesty and truthfulness; moral purity; unpretentiousness and modesty in social and private life; mutual respect in the family; irreconcilability toward injustice; friendship and brotherhood among peoples, and so on.[16]

As for the opponents of traditional values, they tend to underline that the purpose of the concept is to camouflage the actual lack of resources for the national identity after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Russian sociologist Boris Dubin argues that traditionalism is the concept, according to which nations should integrate around traditional values as permanent and reliable basis for national identity. Traditionalism is initiated and supported by the state for its own legitimization, and the very idea of traditional values is aimed on the attaining collective security at the expense of individual moral autonomy. At the same time, the claim that without the return to traditional values the country is doomed to collapse points out serious troubles in the search for national identity of Russia.[17] Sociologist Lev Gudkov defines (neo)-traditionalism as the integral part of the authoritarian regime in Russia, which wants to get back the status of a superpower and to keep Russian people under strict ideological control. Its characteristic feature is anti-Westernism and isolationism, and it is purposed on the elaboration of the common ideology, which is able to sew social fabric together.[18] Russian anthropologist Victor Schnirelman describes traditionalism as an integral part of 'cultural racism' – the essentialist approach to culture, which is understood as objective factor determining the national character and individual identity. Each individual is a product of particular culture and as such is obliged to share its values. Culture is seen as closed, impenetrable, self-sufficient, original system with deep roots and clear borders, and it carriers have their own unique 'national character'.[19]

Thus, the opponents of traditional values place it into broader historical and social context and consider the concept as the tool to achieve pragmatic political goals. By contrast, the strategy of the defenders of traditional values is based on the reference to the ultimate abstracts like 'humankind' or 'world religions' and round figures like 'thousands of years'. Although there is no codified list of traditional values, one could observe that both President Putin and Patriarch Kirill are quite concise in listing traditional ones. On the contrary, the interpreters – representative of governmental offices and pro-Orthodox activists – tend to elaborate the extended lists of values in order to characterize the Russians as people with many positive traits such as honesty, justice, truthfulness, solidarity, kind-heartedness and mercy.

Analyzing the traditional values discourse, I follow Talal Asad's argument that in contemporary world, the barriers separating religious from secular are increasingly fluid.[20] Thus, it is not surprising that religious disputants explore secular logic for their own purposes, as well as secular disputants rely on the religious arguments. For instance, Patriarch Kirill refers to the

[16]Quite a number of people share Putin's belief that *The Moral Code of the Builder of Communism* contains 'quasi-religious values'. In Putin's words, the *Code* is 'a pathetic copy of the Bible: you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, and you shall not steal. It's all there in the *Code* just explained in primitive language and reduced to a disgrace' (Press-Konferensia Vladimira Putina [Vladimir Putin's press-conference], President Rossii, 19 December 2013, http://www.kremlin.ru/news/198590; see also N.I. Boldyrev, 'The Moral Code of the Builder of Communism – the Basis for the Moral Upbringing of the Rising Generation', *Soviet Education* 5:3 (1963), pp. 42–49.

[17]Boris Dubin, *Rossiya nulevykh. Politicheskaya kultura. Istoricheskaya pamyat'. Povsednevnaya zhizn'* [Russia of the zero's. Political culture. Historical memory. Everyday life] (Moscow: Rossiiskaya politicheskaya entsiklopedia, 2012).

[18]Lev Gudkov, *Negativnaya identichnost'* [Negative identity] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2004).

[19]Victor Schnirelman, *'Porog tolerantnosti: ideologia i praktika novogo rasizma'* [Threshold of tolerance: ideology and practice of new racism] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoye obozrenie, 2011), vol. 1, p. 293.

[20]"The "religious" and the "secular" are not essentially fixed categories … There is nothing essentially religious, nor any universal essence that defines "sacred language" or "sacred experience"' (Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003], p. 25).

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philosophical concept of 'human nature', while the authors of the Ministry of Culture's draft share the belief in the similarity of the values and morals of world religions.

'Suitable Past' as a Source of Traditional Values

In the last 100 years, Russia has experienced several social transformations, each of which proclaimed radical rejection of the past, as well as the tendency to restart history from the very beginning. This was especially apparent in the first two decades of the Soviet state in 1920–30s,[21] as well as in the early 1990s after the breakdown of the Soviet Union.[22] At the same time, such a rupture with tradition presupposes the constructing of a new one, based of real, ideal or mythological interpretation of the previous history, as well as creating new social memory and fixing it by various means of symbolic representations (holidays, ceremonies, rituals, etc.).[23] The change of political regimes in Russia was accompanied by new interpretation of history in accordance with the current political situation and the need to legitimize the political power. Gradually, the radical break with the past was replaced by the restoration of connectivity and reconciliation with the past, which presupposes its reconstruction and reinterpretation.[24] At the same time, the past serves as the source of various meanings, which are exploited by the political powers for pragmatic purposes.[25]

Introducing the concept of 'the invented tradition', Eric Hobsbaum asserts: 'Where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past'.[26] The establishing of a 'suitable past' was a common practice in Soviet times where the world history was retrospectively interpreted in such a way that the preconditions for the Russian Revolution of 1917 seemed to originate from the very beginning of humankind. Accordingly, the Soviet state was considered as the inevitable result of the previous historical development. Today, the adjustment of the past to the current political and ideological needs and transformation of the past into 'suitable' one is even more widespread than is Soviet times.[27]

As Antony Giddens notices, to some extent, all traditions are invented and reinvented for diverse reasons, and the conscious construction of tradition is permanently present in the modern period of history. Moreover, 'traditions always incorporate power, whether they

[21]'1920s with their utopian pathos and the cult of the urgent tasks of construction of the future were the time with immensely negative attitude towards the very idea of the history. The history has begun in 1917; before is the class oppression, which is not worth neither learning, nor remembering' (Kirill Kobrin, 'Vseobschee pomeshatelstvo na "istorii"' [General infatuation for 'history'], *Vedomosti*, 1 June 2015, http://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/articles/2015/06/01/594513-vseobschee-pomeshatelstvo-na-istorii). See also Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Arup Banerji, *Writing History in the Soviet Union: Making the Past Work* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008).

[22]Rosalind J. Marsh, *Literature, History and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia, 1991–2006* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

[23]Elena Zhidkova, 'Sovetskaya grazhdanskaya obriadnost' kak alternativa obriadnosti religioznoi' [Soviet civil rituals as the alternative to the religious rituals], *Gosudarstvo, religia, tzerkov* 3–4:30 (2012), pp. 408–442.

[24]Maria Lipman and Alexei Miller (eds), *Istoricheskaya politika v XXI veke* [The politics of history in the 21 century]. (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012).

[25]For a thoughtful analysis of the usage of the past in the rhetoric of Russian presidents (1991–2014), see Olga Malinova, '*Aktual'noe proshloe: simvolicheskaya politika vlastvuishei elitu I dilemma rossiiskoi identichnosti*' [Actual past: symbolic politics of ruling elite and the dilemma of Russian identity] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2015).

[26]Eric Hobsbaum, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1–14, here p.1.

[27]Ivan Kurilla, 'Byt' istorikom v sovremennoi Rossii: vyzovy obshestva I otvety uchenykh' [To be a historian in contemporary Russia: challenges of society and researchers' responses]. *Polit.ru*, 12 July 2014, http://www.polit.ru/article/2014/07/12/kurilla/.

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are constructed in a deliberate way or not'.[28] The question is why the certain tradition is invented in a particular place and a particular time. It is a significant (and paradoxical!) fact that the 'newborn' Russia originated in 1991. It had never existed before in present boundaries and with the current political structure; and as such, it needs a new 'grand narrative' as a source for national identity. That is why the perception of the past has grown increasingly significant for Russians and increasingly salient in the structure of national identity. As a result, over the last 15 years or so, most Russians have reoriented their collective self-definition toward the past.[29]

The overall principle of the symbolic appropriation of the past was proclaimed by Vladimir Putin in the annual Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly in December 2012:

> In order to revive national consciousness, we need to link historical eras and get back to understanding the simple truth that Russia did not begin in 1917 or even in 1991, but rather, that we have a common, continuous history spanning over 1000 years and we must rely on it to find inner strength and purpose in our national development.[30]

Here, one could notice another example of Putin's particular affection for the 'round' historical periods of 'thousand years'.[31] It seems that he understands 'continuity' to be the key element of the interpretation of history aimed on the overcoming of the aftermath of revolutionary breaks and the rupture of tradition of 1917 (Russian Revolution) and 1991 (the breakdown of the Soviet Union). In the presentation for the Valdai International Discussion Club,[32] Putin insists: 'Our entire, uncensored history must be a part of Russian identity'.[33]

The Orthodox version of the principle of 'continuity' is based on the combination of tradition (in general sense) and the ecclesiastical *Predanie* [Tradition]. According to Patriarch Kirill, 'for the Orthodox Christian, tradition is a set of creedal and moral truths that the Church has accepted from the testimony of the Apostles and which it has guarded and developed as a function of the historical circumstances'.[34] *Predanie* constitutes the Russian nation in opposition to the Western liberalism, which brings 'the expansion of alien, destructive social and cultural factors … , and the new way of life that is arising and taking shape outside of any tradition under the influence of today's post-industrial world'.[35]

As Alexander Agadjanian and Kathy Rousselet underline in their analysis of Kirill's worldview,

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[28]Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World* (London: Profile Books, 2011), p. 40.
[29]Boris Dubin, 'The Myth of the "Special Path" in Contemporary Russian Public Opinion'. *Russian Politics & Law* 50:5 (2012), pp. 35–51, here p. 46.
[30]'Address to the Federal Assembly', President of Russia, 12 December 2012, http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/4739.
[31]Olga Malinova considers the idea of the 'thousand years of Russian statehood' as the 'core element' of Putin's symbolic politics (Malinova, '*Aktual'noe proshloe*', p. 164).
[32]The annual meeting of international experts and journalists where Vladimir Putin shares his vision on domestic and foreign affairs.
[33]'Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club', President of Russia, 19 September 2013, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6007.
[34]His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, *Freedom and Responsibility: A Search for Harmony – Human Rights and Personal Dignity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd; Moscow: Publishing House of the Moscow Patriarchate, 2011), p. 3.
[35]Ibid, p. 6.

> The emphasis on Tradition … refers to the collective memory of a particular community … as opposed to the individual, 'atomized' focus of liberalism; therefore, it generates an alternative, communitarian instead of individual, type of legitimation. Second, it refers to historical continuity; it showcases the roots as the opposition to liberalism.[36]

According to the principle of 'continuity', the most significant events of the historic past are those which secure bonds between past and present. In pre-revolutionary Russia, the Romanov dynasty, which came to power in early 1600s, today serves as a symbol of the unity of the people and power against the aggressive West, which constantly tried to conquer Russia. In the Soviet period, the role of the national symbol is attributed to the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45[37] as the story of the unexpected aggression of the insidious enemy against a peaceful country that has managed to defend its independence and freedom of all humankind at the price of extraordinary suffering.[38] Finally, the millennial history of the Orthodox Christianity bonds different periods of the history of Russia together and guarantees the sacredness, duration, and stability of the past as the integral part of the identity of the new Russia.

As a result, one could watch the eclectic *bricolage* of symbols taken from various periods of Russian history, which are supposed to proof its integrity and continuity. The vivid evidence of such *bricolage* is the national flag (Tricolor), established by Peter the Great in 1705 as a flag of the merchant marine; the national emblem in the form of a two-headed eagle, which was inherited by the Moscow kingdom from the Byzantine empire in the fifteenth century; and the national anthem, with a melody composed in 1944 with three versions of the lyrics – one authored in 1944, one in 1977 and one in 2000. The present version affirms that Russia is a 'sacred power', cherished by God, thus replacing the strophe 'Party of Lenin, the people's power' in the previous version.

The principle of 'continuity' seems to be more complex in the Russian Orthodox perception of the history of Russia. The main difference is the interpretation of the Soviet period, which is estimated as 'godless and god-fighting', being the period of history when the Russian Orthodox Church had suffered from state repressions more than anybody else. Metropolitan Hilarion, the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of Moscow Patriarchate, names the Soviet Union 'the country where the authorities forcibly eradicated religion and implanted godlessness. In the Soviet Union the monstrous experiment aimed on disassembling religiosity as such was undertaken'. It was an 'experiment on human nature as such'.[39]

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[36]Alexander Agadjanian and Kathy Rousselet, 'Globalization and Identity Discourse in Russian Orthodoxy' in Victor Roudometof, Alexander Agadjanian, Jerry G. Pankhurst (eds) *Eastern Orthodoxy in a Global Age: Tradition Faces the Twenty-first Century* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), pp. 53–57, pp. 36–37.

[37]The Russian equivalent of World War II, 1939–45.

[38]As the Russian historian, Nicolai Koposov argues, in the 2000s, the Great Patriotic War has become the condensed expression of the very heart of the existing political regime. Thus, the 'myth of the war' proves the unity of the state and the people and the need for security agencies; it victimizes Russia and makes possible to displace Stalin's repressions by the memory of war; its supports the anti-Western rhetoric and at the same time it justifies the partnership of Russia as a 'great power' with Western 'great powers'; it integrates Russia into the tradition of democracy underlining that the allies has struggled for the same values. See Nikolai Koposov, *Pamiat' strogogo rezhima. Istoria I politika v Rossii* [The memory of the major security regime. History and politics in Russia] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011).

[39]'Doklad mitropolita Volokolamskogo Ilariona na simposiume "Traditsionnye tsennosti v epokhu globalizatsii"' [The Metropolitan of Volokolamsk Hilarion's address to the symposium 'Traditional values in the era of

At the same time, the ROC's leaders follow Putin's principle of 'continuity' and take part in developing an appropriate argumentation for its sake. Speaking at the ceremony of the opening of the stele in honor of the House of Romanov, Patriarch Kirill argues:

> Today, the names of our tsars are on this stele again; it is as if the times conjoin. What is all this? Maybe someone will ask why it is done. It is done to make us feel ourselves the single nation in time and space. We cannot live in isolation from our history, we cannot assume that our state is a little more than 80 years old, or, as some says, a little more than 20 years. We are the heirs of the millennial history.[40]

In fact, the atheistic Soviet state was not friendly toward religion; indeed, it could be fairly hostile. Nevertheless, it seems that for the ROC's leaders 'continuity' as the ideological principle surmounts the breaks. Paradoxically, the very reference to the 'godless' Soviet power, which has put the Church into a humiliating and dependent status, as well as the experience of the survival, ensures the symbolic right of the Church to serve as the sole depositary of the spiritual heritage of the Russian people. The 'godless' Soviet power proves the ROC's trustworthiness in the times of 'the monstrous experiment', and allows it to function as an intermedium of 'continuity'. In addition, Patriarch Kirill's statement that the religious faith as traditional value has been embedded into the human nature by God long before the Soviet power, the tsarist Russia, and even the millennial Russian Orthodoxy help the Church to surpass the former offences and to speak on behalf of eternity.

Thus, the analysis of 'suitable past' as the source of traditional values proves the truth of the well-known expression of George Orwell from his novel *1984*: 'He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past'. The purpose of the principle of 'continuity' is to diminish, if not exclude, the debates about historic past, to neutralize controversial interpretations as the source of alternative future and to absorb it as inalienable part of common cultural-historic heritage. In that way, the Soviet, as well as pre-revolutionary, past ceases to be a subject of the actual ideological choice, which could possibly lead to political disagreement, and becomes the basis for a desirable public consensus digesting all differences and overcoming all breaks.[41]

Two main players on the field of the defense of traditional values – President Putin and Patriarch Kirill – both follow the principle of 'continuity', according to which the core values of the Russian culture remain unchanged through its history despite radical breaks with tradition. Thereby, traditional values obtain the qualities of eternity and consistency; they provide 'continuity' and do not depend on caprices of history. Moreover, all people all over the world across all times would have shared these values. On the contrary, the changeable traditional values dependent of any particular period of history could not serve as any guarantee of 'continuity'. At the same time, the desire to obtain reliable values and to patch the holes in tradition is understandable if we take into account the scale of ruptures of the fabric of Russian society in last 100 years. However, choosing only those events from the past that fit to the current ideological inquiries turns traditional values into an abstract idea suspended in a vacuum. The very idea of traditional values is

globalization'], The Russian Orthodox Church: official site of the Moscow Patriarchate, 22 February 2014, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3576196.html.

[40]'Sviateishii Patriarkh Kirill osviatil otrestavrirovanny obelisk v chest' doma Romanovykh u sten Moskovskogo Kremlia' [His Holiness Patriarch Kirill consecrated the restored obelisk in honor of the Romanov dynasty before the walls of Moscow Kremlin]. The Russian Orthodox Church: official site of the Moscow Patriarchate, 4 November 2013, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3344620.html.

[41]Ilia Kalinin, 'Nostal'gicheskaya modernizatsia: sovetskoe proshloe kak istoricheskii gorizont' [Nostalgic modernization: Soviet past as the historical horizon], *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 6:74 (2010), pp. 6–16.

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identified with a conservative principle of static truth, codified once, and for all. Traditional values are prescribed to be shared by everyone, which means by no one in particular.

Traditional Values and their Antagonist: 'The West' as the 'Enemy'

The self-definition as part of the national identity presupposes not only defining what one *is*, but also what one *is not*. As the Norwegian political scientist Iver Neumann notices, 'the face of the other summons the self into existence'.[42] In Russia for centuries, the role of the 'other' as something different from 'us' thus making 'us' ourselves, was assigned to 'the West'. It was viewed either as a civilizational model to emulate or as a degenerate and dehumanized 'alien', which Russia should not copy. Ever since Peter the Great, the debate on whether Russia should choose its own path of the development or follow the West has been a driving force of Russian politics, as well as of the social thought. In the second half of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth, educated society has been split into two camps: Westernizers accepted Peter's reforms completely and associated the future of Russia with progress toward the Western path to modernity and secularism. By contrast, Slavophiles believed in a unique Russian culture, which arose on the spiritual basis of the idealized Orthodoxy faithful to the original patterns of Christianity. Surprisingly, in spite of several radical upheavals within Russia since then, until now, the question: 'What is Russia – East or West?', as well as 'Which path Russia has to follow – Western or its own?' – remains very much the same.[43]

Either in the nineteenth century or in Soviet times or now, it is more the imaginary 'West' than the real West. As Alexei Yurchak notes, 'the West' in the Soviet times was the archetypal manifestation of the 'Soviet imaginary "elsewhere" that was not necessarily about any real place … It was produced locally and existed only at the time when the real West could not be encountered'.[44] However, even now, 25 years since travelling to Western countries became possible for Russian people, 'the West' remains a constructed category that includes beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes forming the conventional, undifferentiated entity with no actual location in space and time. Accordingly, the idea of turning Russia into a 'normal' Western type of society, which was popular in early 1990s, as well as its gradual replacement with the concept of 'special path' [*osobiy put'*] of Russia[45] as a separate civilization in the 2000s, are two sides of the same coin: the 'path' as something one may follow, fall down, or step away. As Boris Dubin underlines, the purpose of the metaphor of 'special path' is precisely 'to give the realm of 'ours' a unity that excludes differentiation and as such is counter-posed to everything different as "alien"'.[46]

The metaphor of a 'special path' presupposes the claim of the distinctiveness and exceptionalism of Russia because of its geographical position, historical circumstances, religious faith, and national character. The opposition of the Russian versus the Western national character is an integral part of the mythology of 'special path', and it seems to be a recurrent thing in Russian identity-building. Thus, in speaking about Russia's distinctiveness, Putin

[42]Iver Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 150.
[43]Olga Malinova, 'Russia and "the West" in the Twentieth Century: A Binary Model of Russian Culture and Transformations of the Discourse on Collective Identity' in Reinhard Krumm, Sergei Medvedev and Hans-Henning Schröder (eds) *Constructing Identities in Europe: German and Russian Perspectives* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2012), pp. 63–79.
[44]Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 159.
[45]The detailed analysis of the concept of 'special path' see *Russian Politics & Law* 50:5 and 50:6 (both 2012).
[46]Dubin, 'Myth of the "Special Path"', p. 41.

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marks out value orientations – namely, the belief in 'the higher moral predestination of the human being, some higher moral principles' – contrary to the Western orientation toward personal success.[47] As the Norwegian political philosopher Pål Kolstø states, there is nothing new in Putin's argumentation. His inventory consists 'for the most part of the same kind of assertions about the Russian national character that so many books on Russian cultural and intellectual history abound in'.[48]

'The West' is a significant reference point for the self-identification of Russia, although its function fluctuates from being the 'other' in the pro-Western version of 'special path' to being the 'enemy' in the anti-Western one. The difference between two versions is quite significant: while the 'other' could be neutral (or even positive) factor of the identity-building, the 'enemy' serves as the cause of all bad things on Earth. The Finish political scientist Vilho Harle specifies: 'The Enemy emerges if and only if "we" and "they" are thought to be *fundamentally* different, that is, when the distinction is understood to reflect the *struggle between good and evil*, and when good is associated with "us" but evil with "them"'.[49] The 'enemy' as the player on the evil's side corrupts values; that is why the 'we' as the representatives of the social wholeness – the people, or the nation – become the exclusive owner of these values. Thus, 'the Enemy … represents a pathology of the social organism. But "we" always represent justice, right, law and morality'.[50]

Thus, Putin constantly underlines the antithetical opposition between liberal tolerance and secularism of the West and morality and organic unity of Russia. He argues that that many Euro-Atlantic countries have moved away from their roots, including Christian values and traditional identities. He is convinced that 'people in many European countries are embarrassed or afraid to talk about their religious affiliations … and … aggressively trying to export this model all over the world'.[51] In opposition to European countries, Putin confirms that defending traditional values

> is absolutely objective and understandable for a state like Russia with its great history and culture, with many centuries of experience, not so-called tolerance neutered and barren, but the actual common natural life of different peoples within the framework of a single state.[52]

As for the numerous statements of the ROC hierarchs concerning traditional values, they are also directed for both inward and outward audience, but for slightly different purposes: if the meaning of traditional values for inward use is more educational and disciplinary, they gain distinct confrontational flavor while being directed outwardly. As for Patriarch Kirill, 'the most fundamental conflict of our present era is the clash [*protivostoyanie*] between the liberal model of civilization on the one hand and national, cultural and religious identity, on the other'.[53] Kirill argues that secular liberalism supports the idea of

[47]'Priamaya liniya s Vladimirom Putinym' [Direct line with Vladimir Putin]. Prezident Rossii, 17 April 2014, http://kremlin.ru/news/20796.
[48]Pål Kolstø, 'National Building in Russia: A Value-oriented Strategy' in Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud (eds) *Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 1–28, here p. 4.
[49]Vilho Harle, *The Enemy with a Thousand Faces: The Tradition of the Other in Western Political Thought and History* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000), p. 12 [emphasis in original].
[50]Ibid., p. 13.
[51]'Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club'. President of Russia, 19 September 2013, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6007.
[52]'Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly'. President of Russia, 12 December 2013, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6402.
[53]His Holiness Kirill, *Freedom and Responsibility*, p. 1.

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emancipation of the sinful individual who rejects anything that binds him and prevents from the affirmation of his sinful self. Human freedom becomes a supreme value, but only as a freedom of choice. The situation when each person is free to determine the scale of moral values on which he or she relies leads to a radical rejection of normative values. According to Kirill, the principal aim of the West is to expel religion from society and to diminish the influence of religion on people's behavior and life. Therefore, Christian values are under grave threat from the West, where religion 'has been ousted to the realm of private life almost as successfully as it was in our country under the Soviet power'.[54] Recently, Kirill has asserted:

> We cannot say that we live in a completely peaceful environment. Today there are battles without roar of guns, and the enemy who threatens us does not visibly cross our borders. However, we are all involved into what the Orthodox tradition calls 'the invisible battle'. Everyone today is involved in this battle. We are offered a chaos, but we should not be bought by these recommendations and should not participate in the creation of chaos … We are offered sin, a destruction of the moral foundations.[55]

As the Canadian theologian Andrii Krawchuk concludes, the concept of 'the West' has become deeply embedded within Orthodox self-consciousness and modes for self-expression: 'As a constructed category, the West has proven to be of immense utility to Orthodox discourses, whether for explanatory illustrations of identity and difference, for reasoned critiques, or for outright polemical denunciations'.[56] Accusing the Western 'militant secularism' for the denial of moral values of Christianity seems to be a way to strengthen the moral superiority of the Russian Orthodox Church, which, in Metropolitan Hilarion's words, gives her a right to offer herself as 'an inspiring example of spiritual and moral revival also for the Western countries'.[57] In the same way, in the Soviet times, the West was described as inherently immoral capitalist system of exploitation, thus affirming the moral superiority of the USSR.[58]

Thus, the comparison with the West is an intrinsic part of both secular and religious statements concerning traditional values. It seems that without referring to 'the West' they would simply lose their substance. Negative stereotypes and enemy images seem to be crucial for the Russian way of constructing national identity. The purpose of the image of 'the West' as an existential enemy is to strengthen Russia's distinctiveness as the defender of traditional values on behalf of the humankind, to mobilize the people of Russia, and to unite them around political power and religious authorities, which guarantee security and stability. Accordingly, the image of the 'we' in comparison with the 'enemy' is

[54]Ibid., p. 42.

[55]'Vystuplenie Sviateishego Patriarkha Kirilla na vstreche so studentami vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii Smolenskoi oblasti' [The address of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to the students of higher education institutions of Smolensk region]. The Russian Orthodox Church: official site of the Moscow Patriarchate, 13 August 2013, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3198884.html.

[56]Andrii Krawchuk, 'Introduction' in Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer (eds) *Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness: Values, Self-Reflection, Dialogue* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 1–16, here p. 8.

[57]Hilarion, Mitropolit Volokolamsky, 'Rozhdestvo – eto prazdnik ne tol'ko radosti, no I nadezdy' [Metropolitan of Volokolamsk Hilarion, Christmas as the festival not only of joy, but also of hope]. The Russian Orthodox Church: official site of the Moscow Patriarchate, 28 December 2013, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3484436.html.

[58]Alfons Brüning, 'Morality and Patriotism: Continuity and Change in Russian Orthodox Occidentalism since the Soviet Era' in Krawchuk and Bremer (eds) *Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness*, pp. 29–47.

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boosted as virtuous and good.[59] At the same time, the gradual intensification of the image of the 'enemy' indicates that Russian society experiences serious social tensions: asserting what Russia *is not* is certainly not enough to form the reliable national identity. As Lev Gudkov indicates, instead of relying on positive representations, which forms the ground for the joint activity of people, the consolidation of Russians is based on repulsion, negation, and demarcation.[60] The long history of unhealthy affection for 'the West' reveals the lack of necessary cogency in the traditional values discourse. They are put into the context of defending and attacking the imaginary antagonist instead of being concerned with Russia alone.

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Traditional Values between Universality and Particularism

Russia is not the first country in the world, which believes that it is her right and duty to spread domestic values and ideals throughout the world. As the British historian Geoffrey Hosking argues:

> Most large European nations have gone through at least one period in their history when they assumed that their religion, their civilization, their political system, or their way of life was especially beneficial, and that it ought to be spread to the whole of humanity.[61]

Hosking mentions Catholicism in the case of sixteenth-century Spain; liberty, equality and fraternity in the case of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France; Protestantism in the case of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain; and the USA as today's leading missionary nation.[62] Both pre-revolutionary Russia and Soviet Union shared the ideology of a 'special path' (although from different perspectives), which paradoxically combines the belief in the uniqueness of Russia and in its universal significance. Thus, there is nothing new in the self-image of Russia as the depository of traditional values that are bound to save the world, nor in the messianic calling to become a model for the rest of humankind.

In the contemporary world, Russia is not alone in defending traditional values. The conservative American political commentator Patrick Buchanan proposes that just as the twentieth century struggle was vertical, 'the 21st century struggle may be horizontal, with conservatives and traditionalists in every country arrayed against the militant secularism of a multicultural and transnational elite'.[63] From Buchanan's perspective, Putin seems to strive for moral leadership of all conservatives in the world who dislike liberal values, thus plugging into the most powerful battle of the modern world: the battle between traditional Christianity, which is represented by Russia, and the new paganism led by the United States administration. Putin sees a serious challenge to Russia's identity in the fact that many Euro-Atlantic countries reject their roots, including the Christian values that constitute the basis of Western civilization. According to Putin, 'they are denying

[59]Bo Petersson, 'Mirror, Mirror … Myth-making, Self-images and Views of the US "Other" in Contemporary Russia' in Ray Taras (ed) *Russia's Identity in International Relations: Images, Perceptions, Misperceptions* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 11–23.
[60]Gudkov, *Negativnaya identichnost'*, pp. 156–157.
[61]Geoffrey Hosking, *Rulers and Victims: The Russians in the Soviet Union* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 3.
[62]Ibid., pp. 4–5.
[63]Pat Buchanan, 'Is Putin One of Us?' *Creators.com*, December 2013, http://www.creators.com/opinion/pat-buchanan/is-putin-one-of-us.html.

moral principles and all traditional identities: national, cultural, religious and even sexual. They are implementing policies that equate large families with same-sex partnerships, belief in God with the belief in Satan'.[64] After all, Putin himself claims his position as a conservative one.[65] In doing so, he limits his potential audience to Buchanan's conservatives and traditionalists rather than try to attract 'more and more people in the world who support our position'.[66]

In the same way, Patriarch Kirill limits his potential allies by referring to 'many morally healthy people',[67] keeping the questions concerning the criterion of the moral health and the methods of separating the sheep from the goats opened. Kirill executes the strategy of contrasting Russian traditionalism to Western liberalism, which serves to legitimize the right to sin and as such 'is inevitably doomed to spiritual degeneration, to becoming a stage for dark and unruly passions'.[68] The idea that the Western liberal understanding of freedom as arbitrariness opposes the Orthodox concept of freedom as voluntary obedience to God's truth is the basis of Kirill's critique of liberalism, which leads to 'a radical rejection of the normative significance of tradition, especially religious tradition, and to the absolute right of an individual to determine what is good and what is evil'.[69]

The appeal to the transcendent battle between God (good) and Satan (evil), as well as the accusing liberalism in legitimizing human sinfulness, proves that both Putin and Kirill considers the defense of traditional values as a world-historical mission. Similar to the Marxist-Leninist universal project of the communist future of the humankind, which seemed to redeem all sins of the previous history, today's Russia strives to offer a narrative of traditional values 'that goes beyond its national specificities, has universal value, and thus can be accepted, integrated, and reinterpreted in other contexts'.[70] Thereby, Russia hopes to contribute to the moral perfection of other nations. At the same time, both Putin and Kirill's conservatism is quite practical and is directed on developing close connections with political and religious right wings in Western Europe and the USA. As American sociologist John Anderson underlines, the common feature of 'conservative Christian movements … is their patriotic commitment – a belief that their nation is special and perhaps has a mission to spread their values to a wider world'.[71]

A good example of the attempt to recruit combatants for the universal battle for good against evil as well as of practical steps in defending traditional values on the international arena are the debates organized by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2009–13 on the theme of interconnection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and traditional values of the humankind. Since 2009, the Russian Federation with active

[64]'Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club'. President of Russia, 19 September 2013, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6007.

[65]'We know that … our position on defending traditional values … is a conservative position. But speaking in the words of Nikolai Berdyaev, the point of conservatism is not that it prevents movement forward and upward, but that it prevents movement backward and downward, into chaotic darkness and a return to a primitive state' ('Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly', President of Russia, 12 December 2013, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6402).

[66]Ibid.

[67]'Vystuplenie Sviateishego Patriarkha Kirilla na Rozhdestvenskikh parlamentskikh vstrechakh v Sovete Federatsii RF' [His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow statement for the Christmas parliamentary meeting in the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation]. The Russian Orthodox Church: official site of the Moscow Patriarchate, 28 January, 2014, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3544704.html.

[68]His Holiness Kirill, *Freedom and Responsibility*, p. 11.

[69]Ibid, p. 47.

[70]Laruelle, 'Beyond Anti-Westernism', p. 6.

[71]John Anderson, *Conservative Christian Politics in Russia and the United States: Dreaming of Christian Nations* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 5.

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participation of the ROC has tabled three resolutions at the UNHRC attempting to give legal force to the concept of traditional values. The aim was to extend human rights into areas of family and gender relations, which are especially sensitive in the light of traditional values. The debate revealed divided views and resulted in carefully balanced conclusion that traditional values may have both negative and positive impact on the effective implementation of human rights. The document adopted by the session of UNHRC on 6 December 2012 asserts that because traditions of different countries are so varied and complex that 'some traditions comply with human rights norms and contribute to their promotion and protection, others undermine or are in conflict with them'.[72] Kristina Stoeckl concludes that the very case illustrates how the Russian government and the Moscow Patriarchate coordinate their efforts in pushing through an anti-liberal human rights agenda and emphasize repeatedly that human rights should not be monopolized by Western liberal interpretation. In spite of some differences between the goals of the Russian government and the Moscow Patriarchate, 'both for the Patriarchate and the government, the "ideal" Russian society is a non-pluralistic and closed society; the only difference is that the government wants it for reasons of power, the Patriarchate for reasons of mission'.[73]

Another example is the International Forum '*Mnogodetnaya semi'a i budushee chelovechestva*' [The large families and the future of humanity], which was held in Moscow in September 2014. The Forum adopted the resolution addressed to national leaders around the world, as well as to the United Nations General Assembly, the UN Secretary General and the UN Supreme Commissioner for Human Rights. The resolution affirms that the destruction of 'natural family values,' which is supported by liberal Western societies,

> is ultimately aimed at destroying faith in God, as well as belief in good. These post-modern policies focused on the material wealth are destroying what is human in the human being (as created by God), at wrecking the spiritual dimension in Man – all of which are his distinguishing features in Living Nature.[74]

Although the Forum was concentrated on the 'natural family values' as particular aspect of traditional values, the vocabulary of the resolution refers to the same type of ultimate abstracts, which one could notice in Putin's and Kirill's statements.

Nevertheless, the fulfillment of the global mission on the fight for good against evil is not the easy task because of the substantial ambiguity: it combines universal significance of traditional values as 'the spiritual and moral foundation of civilization in every nation for thousands of years'[75] with particularism of the ideology of 'special path' and spiritual

[72]'In the report of the OHCHR [Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights] workshop on the traditional values of humankind, attention was drawn to the fact that perceptions of what constituted "traditional values" were highly subjective and dependent on societal power structures. It was noted that some practices and attitudes at odds with human dignity were derived from traditional values. Tradition is often invoked to justify maintaining the status quo, failing to take into account the reality that traditions, cultures and social norms have always evolved and will continue to change with time' ('Study of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms through a better understanding of traditional values of humankind'. United Nations General Assembly, 6 December 2012, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/AdvisoryCom/Session10/A.HRC.22.71_en.pdf).

[73]Kristina Stoeckl, *The Russian Orthodox Church and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 113.

[74]'Vozzvanie uchastnikov Mezdunarodnogo foruma "Mnogodetnaya semia I budushee chelovechestva"' [The participants of the International Forum 'The Large Families and the Future of Humanity'], Charity Foundation of the Prelate Basil the Great, 14 September 2014, http://www.ruscharity.ru/news/303.htm.

[75]'Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly'. President of Russia, 12 December 2013, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6402.

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exclusiveness of Russia symbolized by the Russian Orthodoxy.[76] As Alexander Agadjanian and Kathy Rousselet show in their analysis of the ROC ideology:

> The discourse of the universal definitely yields to the discourse of particularism: The idea of uniqueness stands behind both the principle of autocephaly and the principle of national identity, thus creating a double and interconnected particularism of a Church and a nation.[77]

As a result, Agadjanian concludes, 'Russian Orthodoxy may claim hegemony, but this hegemony is only relevant locally, within a particular territory, and not universally'.[78] Moreover, the exclusive status of 'traditional religion' objectively limits the influence of the ROC even within Russia because it could hardly be the universal representative of the increasingly complex, multireligious, and multiethnic Russian society. It is the same with regard to Russia as secular state: on one hand, it claims moral superiority over other countries; on the other hand, it seems to be locked within the limits of the ideology of 'special path', which is applicable exclusively to Russia.

Although Putin's and Kirill's arguments in justifying traditional values may differ in the detail (Putin refers to the political concepts like 'civilization' and 'democracy', while Kirill appeals to 'human nature' created by God), they both proceed from the antithetical opposition between liberal individualism on the one hand and collective traditional values on the other. They are both convinced that the commitment to traditional values presupposes the broader view on the world then liberal individualism, because, as Kirill argues, 'we see the humankind not as a heap of sand where the separate grains may be arbitrary scattered, but as the organic unity'.[79] In short, the idea of traditional values paradoxically recalls both the Soviet slogan of the expansion of communism over the humanity, as well as the Slavophile's belief in the uniqueness of 'organic' Russian culture, which remains faithful to Christian moral values in opposition to the 'sinful' West.

Conclusion

There is no generally agreed definition of the term 'traditional values'. Those values perceived by secular and religious actors as 'traditional' are not only highly subjective but also typically dependent on given socio-political context. My intention in this article is neither to defend nor to call into question the concept of traditional values, but rather to highlight similarities and differences in the arguments of secular and religious parties that are used to justify their positions. An examination of the concept of traditional values both in its secular and religious interpretations, allows the following conclusions to be drawn:

[76]'A fundamental ambiguity of the "Russian idea" is that it claims both a specific path for Russia and universal significance. According to this "national but messianic" narrative, every civilization has a transcendent idea of its own and is the bearer of a portion of divine truth; should this unique character disappear, all mankind will be left impoverished' (Laruelle, 'Beyond Anti-Westernism', p. 1).

[77]Agadjanian and Rousselet, 'Globalization and Identity Discourse', p. 36.

[78]Alexander Agajanian, 'Russia's "Cursed Issues", Post-Soviet Religion, and the Endurance of Secular Modernity' in Kristina Stoeckl and Massimo Rosati (eds) *Multiple Modernities and Postsecular Societies* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 79–96, here p. 91.

[79]'Vystuplenie Sviateishego Patriarkha Kirilla na Rozhdestvenskikh parlamentskikh vstrechakh v Sovete Federatsii RF' [His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow statement for the Christmas parliamentary meeting in the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation]. The Russian Orthodox Church: official site of the Moscow Patriarchate, 28 January 2014, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3544704.html.

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(1) As a constructed category, traditional values rely on a particular interpretation of history, namely, on the selection of a 'suitable past' as well as on the principle of historical 'continuity'. The latter, in order to achieve ideological homogeneity, tends to elide contradictions between historical periods, thus neutralizing their controversial interpretations. In general, traditional values are invoked for the sake of maintaining a given socio-political *status quo* – this may explain why they are presented as permanent and invariable.
(2) The defense of traditional values is typically based on the disclosure of an 'enemy' and the threat that this enemy poses toward the maintenance of such values rather than on a demonstration of their merits; consequently, the traditional values discourse lacks the necessary cogency to serve as a basis for ideological consensus.
(3) The claim of the universal humanitarian role played by traditional values contradicts their particular usage in the Russian context; the metaphor of 'special path' [*osobiy put'*] is fundamentally ambiguous, since it simultaneously strives to demonstrate both Russia's exclusive role and its universal significance.

To a considerable degree, the arguments of the secular (Putin) and religious (Kirill) defenders of traditional values echo each other; nevertheless, Kirill's interpretation, which employs sophisticated theological and philosophical argumentation, is more nuanced and thus more alarming. Both Putin and Kirill tend to elevate the debate to the level of a universal struggle between good and evil. In general, the concept of traditional values is used by both secular powers and religious authorities to ideologically consolidate Russian society, at the same time as recruiting potential allies in the international arena.

In addition, the presence of traditional values in Russian public discourse reveals serious controversies in the search for a new national identity, as well as the lack of any reliable common values that might give meaning and structure to the everyday lives of citizens. The identity crisis that has persisted in Russia since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, with its system of collective values and symbols, is characterized by particularism – that is, by the multiplication identities (social, ethnic, family, etc.). Hence, the 'traditional values' discourse is aimed at the cohering the nation around certain meanings that are presented as having both historical and ideological integrity. The question is whether this artificial construction, based on a mythologization of history and opposition to various 'enemies', could be convincing enough for the Russian people.

The scope of this article permits neither a comparison of traditional values (understood in terms of community affiliation, with individual value perspectives), nor an identification of the role played by traditional values in the construction of personal identities. This question – how traditional values are enacted at the level of the individual, and how these enactments are connected with secular and/or religious convictions – may shape the next stage of research.

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